

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAGHDA 00728 051305Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 SSM-03 HA-05
MCT-01 /111 W

-----122308 060655Z /17

R 050929Z APR 78
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5959
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BAGHDAD 0728

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PROP, IZ, XF, PINR
SUBJ: SADDAM HUSSEIN ON PALESTINE, LEBANON, THE U.S. AND
POLITICAL ASSASSINATION

1. SUMMARY. IRAQI STRONGMAN REAFFIRMS SUPPORT FOR
PALESTINIAN CAUSE, ACKNOWLEDGES IRAQI "VOLUNTEERS" IN
LEBANON AND NAMES US AS LEADER OF ANTI-ARAB FORCES.
HUSSEIN REJECTS POLITICAL ASSASSINATION IN PRINCIPLE
BUT EXPRESSES UNDERSTANDING FOR MOTIVATIONS BEHIND IT.
END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER A WEEK'S DELAY, LOCAL PRESS FINALLY PUBLISHED
REMARKS WHICH VICE-CHAIRMAN SADDAM HUSSEIN MADE TO DELE-
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GATES AT PALESTINE FILM FESTIVAL ON MARCH 23. (AMONG THOSE
PRESENT WERE GINA LOLABRIGIDA AND VENESSA REDGRAVE.)
PREDICTABLY, HE SPOKE OF IRAQ'S ALL-OUT SUPPORT OF
PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION. CONDEMNING ISRAELI AGGRESSION
IN LEBANON, HUSSEIN SAID, "WE ARE SENDING AID AND
VOLUNTEERS TO SUPPORT THE LEBANESE AND THE PALESTINIAN
RESISTANCE, AND THESE VOLUNTEERS ARE ALREADY THERE.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO BOOST THE FIGHTERS IN KEEPING WITH OUR CAPABILITIES WHEREEVER THE NEED FOR FIGHTING ARISES AND WHENEVER THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO."

3. HUSSEIN TALKED AT LENGTH ABOUT "FORCES OF GOOD," WHICH HE SEES WINNING HUMANITARIAN STRUGGLES OVER TIME AND "FORCES OF EVIL," REPRESENTED BY IMPERIALISM. LATTER, HE BELIEVES, ARE INEVITABLY DOOMED.

4. INEVITABLE DOOM OF FORCES OF EVIL MAY BE WELL DOWN THE ROAD. HUSSEIN EVEN CONCEDES THAT AVERAGE ISRAELI PRESENTLY POSSESSES SCIENTIFIC CAPABILITY SUPERIOR TO HIS ARAB COUNTERPART. HE EXPECTS ARABS TO OVERCOME THIS TECHNOLOGICAL GAP "WITHIN THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS." HE CAUTIONS, HOWEVER, THAT A NEW WAR WITH ISRAEL MAY BREAK OUT EVEN SOONER.

5. HUSSEIN SPECIFIED THE IDENTITY OF THE FORCES OF GOOD AND EVIL IN THIS INTERNATIONAL MORALITY PLAY. "THE QUARTERS HELPING THE ARABS ARE THE SOVIET UNION, THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, THE PROGRESSIVE STATES AND THE PATRIOTIC PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS AROUND THE WORLD. THE QUARTERS HOSTILE TO THE ARABS ARE THE UNITED STATES AND ITS ALLIES."

6. TAKING THE LONG VIEW, HUSSEIN RAISED POSSIBILITY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT ISRAELIS MAY OVERPLAY THEIR HAND IN WESTERN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES BY DISREGARDING INTERESTS OF NATIONS WHICH NOW SUPPORT THEM. "IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE PEOPLES OF WESTERN EUROPE, AND EVEN THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, CAN TOLERATE THIS INDEFINITELY."

7. ANSWERING A QUESTION ABOUT THE ASSASSINATION OF YOUSIF AL-SEBAI, HUSSEIN EXPLAINED THE IRAQI POSTION AS FOLLOWS: "AS A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY, WE HAVE OUR OWN VIEW OF POLITICAL ASSASSINATION AS A MODE OF ACTION. WE REJECT POLITICAL ASSASSINATION AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE. BUT AS MANY OF THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD FIND THEMSELVES COMPELLED TO KILL, THEY DO SO NOT OUT OF LIKING FOR CRIME BUT AS ONE FORM OF ATTACHMENT TO LIFE. IN THIS PERSPECTIVE ONE MUST SEE THE REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES WHICH INVOLVE COMPULSION TO KILL, AS IS THE CASE WITH THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PALESTINIAN COMMANDOS. WHEN THIS BECOMES NECESSARY AS A MATTER OF SELF-EXPRESSION, WE ARE NOT AGAINST IT."

8. COMMENT. HUSSEIN SELDOM SPEAKS IN PUBLIC WITH SUCH BLUNTNESS. NONETHELESS, WEEK'S DELAY IN

PUBLICATION SUGGESTS THAT HE REVEIUED TRANSCRIPT OF
HIS SEEMINGLY SPONTANEOUS REMARKS AND MADE DECISION
TO PUT THEM ON THE RECORD. UNLIKE PRESIDENT BAKR,
HUSSEIN USUALLY DISGUISES HARDLINE VIEWS IN VAGUE
AND DELPHIC GENERALITIES. SOME OF HIS APOLOGISTS
AMONG IRAQIS AND DIPLOMATIC CORPS BELIEVE HE IS
RESPONDING TO CHALLENGE FROM CRUDER RIVALS BY
PITCHING REMARKS TO LEVEL OF UNSOPHISTICATED BAATHI
CADRES WHOSE SUPPORT HE WILL NEED IN POST-BAKR ERA.
WHATEVER THE EXPLANATION, HUSSEIN HAS CLEARLY INDICATED
THAT IRAQI REGIME FEELS LITTLE NEED AT THIS TIME TO
SOFTEN ITS RADICAL IMAGE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ASSASSINATION, PALESTINAINS, COMBAT OPERATIONS, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BAGHDA00728
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780148-0476
Format: TEL
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780492/aaaaczwwq.tel
Line Count: 128
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fe067db6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3073929
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SADDAM HUSSEIN ON PALESTINE, LEBANON, THE U.S. AND POLITICAL ASSASSINATION
TAGS: PROP, PINR, MPOL, IZ, XF, IS, (HUSSEIN, SADDAM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fe067db6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014